

Message Text

PAGE 01 CAIRO 03632 241428Z

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ACTION SS-30

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S E C R E T CAIRO 3632
EXDIS
E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR MARR EG IS
SUBJECT: INCREASED ISRAELI READINESS

REF: CAIRO 3624 (NOTAL)

1. OUR ABILITY MONITOR EGYPTIAN MILITARY IS LIMITED
HENCE OUR INFORMATION NECESSARILY LIMITED. FOLLOWING
FURTHER OBSERVATIONS ARE PERTINENT:

2. AT USINT REQUEST FOREIGN MINISTRY AND MINISTRY
OF WAR TODAY AGREED TOO SHORT NOTICE CONDUCT STAFFDEL
KENNEY FRONT LINES IN ISMAILIYYA AND SUEZ NOVEMBER 25.
UNLIKE CODEL STRATTON TOUR, TRIP WILL NOT INCLUDE PORT
SAID AREA WHICH MINISTRY OF WAR SAYS WILL MAKE TOO
LONG A DAY. GENERAL MAMOUN, ASSISTANT TO THE MINISTER
OF WAR, WILL AGAIN ESCORT GROUP AND IS ARRANGING
TALKS WITH FRONT LINE EGYPTIAN COMMANDERS. USINT
ESCORT OFFICER WILL ALSO ACCOMPANY.

3. GOE READINESS ARRANGE SECOND SUCH TRIP IN THREE
DAYS SUGGESTS IT SEES NO PRESENT REASON BAR OFFICIAL
AMERICAN VISITORS FROM FRONT LINE AREAS. SUCH A
RESTRICTION WOULD DOUBTLESS BE IMPOSED IF EGYPTIANS
CONTEMPLATED INITIATING IMMINENT MAJOR RESUMPTION OF
HOSTILITIES. REASON CITED FOR EXCLUDING PORT SAID
IS PLAUSIBLE. ADDITIONALLY, MAMOUN, WHO SUFFERED
HEART ATTACK LAST MONTH WHILE COMMANDING 2ND ARMY ON
WEST BANK AND HAD TO BE RELIEVED, WAS DISCHARGED FROM
SECRET

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HOSPITAL ONLY FEW DAYS AGAO. TWO SUCH LONG TRIPS IN
THREE DAYS PERHAPS MORE THAN HIS HEALTH PERMITS.

4. WE ARE ALSO MINDFUL THAT SADAT PLANS LEAVE FOR

ALGIERS EITHER LATE NOVEMBER 25 OR 26 TO ATTEND ARAB SUMMIT. ASSAD ARRIVES CAIRO TODAY EN ROUTE ALGIERS AND OTHER ARAB CHIEFS OF STATE MAY TRANSIT IN NEXT DAY OR SO. AN EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE TO RESUME MAJOR HOSTILITIES DURING SADAT'S ABSENCE SEEMS UNLIKELY. AT SAME TIME WE EXPECT EGYPTIAN ARMY BE ON A HEIGHTENED STATE OF ALERT TO COPE WITH POSSIBLE ISRAELI SURPRISE ATTACK WHILE SUMMIT IS ON.

5. ONE OTHER DANGER COMES TO MIND. WE HAVE HAD RECENT REPORTS FROM UNEF OFFICER AND CORRESPONDENTS THAT ISRAELI FORCES ON WEST BANK HIGHLY CONSCIOUS OF THEIR VULNERABILITY TO THREE EGYPTIAN DIVISIONS WHICH SURROUND THEM. ISRAELI HAVE QUIETLY SOUGHT, AND CONTINUE TO DO SO, TO IMPROVE THEIR DEFENSIVE POSITIONS BY MOVING SMALL UNITS TO HERETOFORE UNOCCUPIED STRATEGIC PERIMETER POINTS OVER STRONG EGYPTIAN PROTESTS THAT SUCH MOVEMENTS VIOLATE CEASEFIRE. WHILE EGYPTIANS HAVE THUS FAR BORNE THESE ALLEGED VIOLATIONS WITH NO MORE THAN PROTESTS, THEY MAY AT SOME TIME BE PROVOKED INTO ATTEMPTING ELIMINATE ONE OR ANOTHER WITH ATTENDANT RISK OF ESCALATION.

EILTS

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS ADDED PER S/S-O - MR. TWOHIE.

SECRET

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